

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2491

To provide lasting protection for inventoried roadless areas within the  
National Forest System.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 2, 2019

Mr. GALLEGRO (for himself, Ms. HAALAND, Ms. GABBARD, Ms. MOORE, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. PAPPAS, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. SOTO, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. COHEN, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. TONKO, Mr. SIRES, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. CASTEN of Illinois, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. POCAN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. NEGUSE, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. DEGETTE, and Mr. CASE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To provide lasting protection for inventoried roadless areas  
within the National Forest System.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Roadless Area Con-  
3 servation Act of 2019”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Congress finds that—

6 (1) there is a compelling need to establish na-  
7 tional protection for inventoried roadless areas of the  
8 National Forest System in order to protect the  
9 unique social and ecological values of those irreplace-  
10 able resources;

11 (2) roadless areas protect healthy watersheds  
12 and the numerous benefits of healthy watersheds,  
13 which include—

14 (A) providing the setting for many forms  
15 of outdoor recreation;

16 (B) ensuring a supply of clean water for  
17 domestic, agricultural, and industrial uses;

18 (C) providing drinking water to tens of  
19 millions of citizens of the United States; and

20 (D) helping maintain abundant and  
21 healthy fish and wildlife populations and habi-  
22 tats;

23 (3) maintaining roadless areas in a relatively  
24 undisturbed condition—

25 (A) saves downstream communities mil-  
26 lions of dollars in water filtration costs; and

1 (B) is crucial to preserve the flow of af-  
2 fordable, clean water to a growing population;

3 (4) the protection of roadless areas can main-  
4 tain biological strongholds and refuges for many im-  
5 periled species by halting the ongoing fragmentation  
6 of the landscape into smaller and smaller parcels of  
7 land divided by road corridors;

8 (5) roadless areas conserve native biodiversity  
9 by serving as a bulwark against the spread of non-  
10 native invasive species;

11 (6) roadless areas provide important backcoun-  
12 try fish and game habitat, creating opportunities for  
13 hunting and commercial and sport fishing;

14 (7) roadless areas provide unparalleled opportu-  
15 nities for outdoor recreation, including hiking, camp-  
16 ing, picnicking, wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing,  
17 cross-country skiing, canoeing, mountain-biking, and  
18 similar activities;

19 (8) while roadless areas may have many wilder-  
20 ness-like attributes, unlike wilderness areas, the use  
21 of mechanized means of travel is allowed in many  
22 roadless areas;

23 (9) roadless areas contain many sites sacred to  
24 Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and other groups  
25 that use roadless areas for spiritual and religious

1 practices and access, including customary and tradi-  
2 tional uses and activities;

3 (10) from the inception of Federal land man-  
4 agement, the mission of the Forest Service has been  
5 to manage the National Forest System for multiple  
6 uses, including resource utilization, conservation,  
7 and other uses;

8 (11) consistent with the multiple-use mission  
9 described in paragraph (10), this Act—

10 (A) ensures the continued protection of so-  
11 cial and ecological values, while allowing for  
12 many multiple uses of inventoried roadless  
13 areas; and

14 (B) does not impose any new limitations  
15 on—

16 (i) inventoried roadless areas; or

17 (ii) the use of, or access to, National  
18 Forest System, State, or private land out-  
19 side inventoried roadless areas;

20 (12) enacting a law for the protection of inven-  
21 toried roadless areas—

22 (A) provides additional reliability to areas  
23 with recreation-based economies that depend on  
24 public land without roads for jobs, revenue, and  
25 consumer spending; and

1 (B) encourages forest managers to con-  
2 tinue giving priority to conducting fuel reduc-  
3 tion treatments in the areas in which the treat-  
4 ments will have the most impact;

5 (13) wildfires are almost twice as likely to occur  
6 in roaded areas as in roadless areas, because road-  
7 less areas are generally located further away from  
8 communities and are harder to access;

9 (14) the Forest Service has an enormous back-  
10 log of maintenance needs for the existing 371,581-  
11 mile road system of the Forest Service that will cost  
12 \$3,200,000,000 to eliminate; and

13 (15) continued protection of roadless areas will  
14 continue to allow for the development of hydropower  
15 projects.

16 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to provide,  
17 within the context of multiple-use management, lasting  
18 protection for inventoried roadless areas within the Na-  
19 tional Forest System.

20 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

21 In this Act:

22 (1) INVENTORIED ROADLESS AREA.—The term  
23 “inventoried roadless area” means any area in which  
24 road construction, road reconstruction, or logging is  
25 subject to regulation under the Roadless Rule.

1           (2) ROADLESS RULE.—The term “Roadless  
2 Rule” means part 294 of title 36, Code of Federal  
3 Regulations, as adopted on January 12, 2001, and  
4 modified for Idaho on October 16, 2008, and for  
5 Colorado on July 3, 2012, and December 19, 2016.

6           (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
7 the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the  
8 Chief of the Forest Service.

9 **SEC. 4. PROTECTION OF INVENTORIED ROADLESS AREAS.**

10         The Secretary shall not allow road construction, road  
11 reconstruction, or logging in an inventoried roadless area  
12 where those activities are prohibited by the Roadless Rule.

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